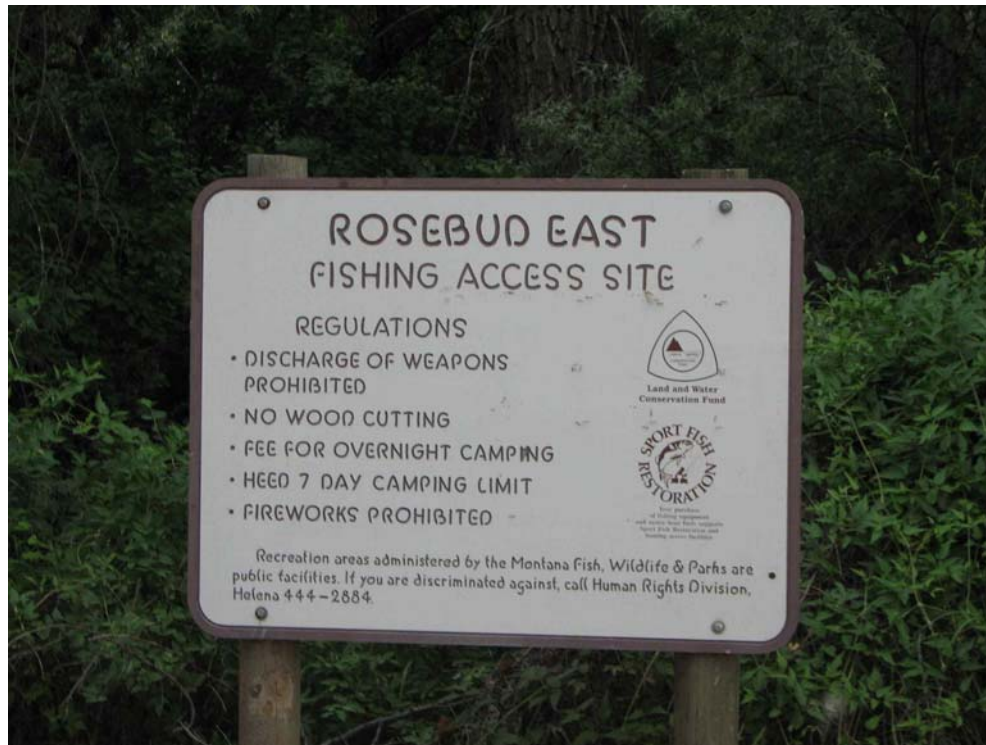


Draft Environmental Assessment



ROSEBUD EAST Boat Ramp Improvement Project

September 2006



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

Rosebud East Fishing Access Site Boat Ramp Improvement Project

Draft Environmental Assessment

MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposes to remove a small sandbar in the Yellowstone River that currently impedes use of the boat ramp at Rosebud East Fishing Access Site (FAS).
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605, which directs Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established an earmarked funding account to ensure that this fishing access site function would be established.
3. **Name of project:** Rosebud East Boat Ramp Improvement Project
4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks is the project sponsor.
5. **If applicable:**
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Fall 2006
Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2006
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 50
6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):** Township 6N, Range 40E, Section 13, in Rosebud County, Montana.

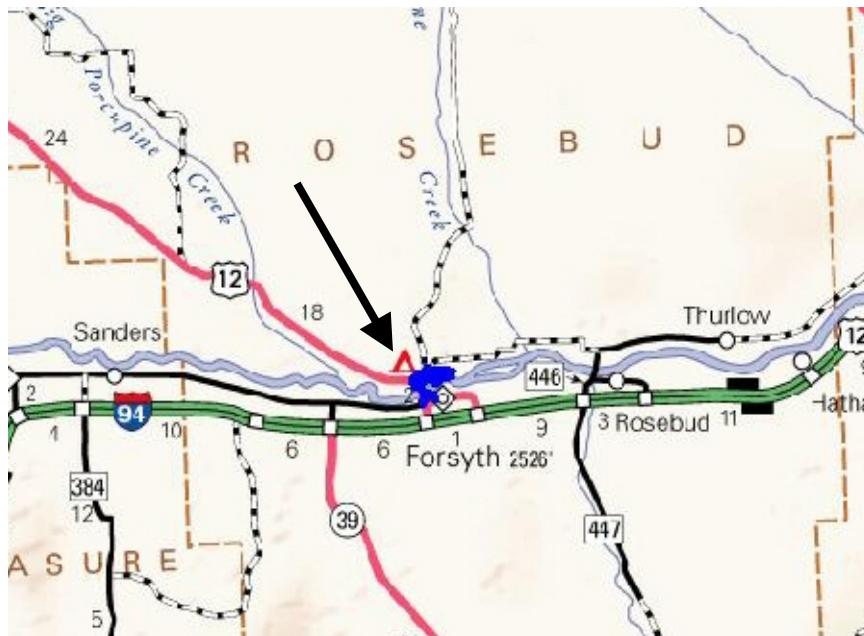


Figure 1. Area map showing approximate location of Rosebud East FAS, symbolized by the blue fish.

7. Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u> 1 </u>
Residential	<u> 0 </u>		
Industrial	<u> 0 </u>	(e) Productive:	
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	<u> 0 </u>	Irrigated cropland	<u> 0 </u>
		Dry cropland	<u> 0 </u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	<u> 0 </u>	Forestry	<u> 0 </u>
		Rangeland	<u> 0 </u>
		Other	<u> 0 </u>

8. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits: permits will be filed at least 2 months prior to project start.

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks	SPA 124
Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality	318
Montana Dept of Natural Resources and Conservation	310
US Corps of Engineers	Section 404
US Corps of Engineers	Section 10

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
MFWP Capitol Fund	\$15,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
NA	

8. **Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:**

Rosebud East FAS is located on the Yellowstone River at river mile 236 on the edge of the town of Forsyth (see Figures 1 and 2). Rosebud East is one of the larger (29 acres) and more developed FAS's on this stretch of the Yellowstone River, providing camping and latrines as well as a boat ramp, and is a popular gathering area for locals. Rosebud East has lately seen a large increase in use from visitors from other parts of Montana and out-of-state tourists as well. The entire section of the Yellowstone River that stretches from the Powder River to the Bighorn River has become increasingly popular in the last decade, rising in state rankings for number of angler days from 55th in 1997 to 39th in 2003, and from 3rd to 2nd in popularity within FWP Region 7. Visitation numbers for Rosebud East FAS itself was 47,365 in 2005, counting all users. These visitation numbers include a significant amount of non-angling use from residents in the Forsyth and surrounding area. The site is a popular destination for local gatherings, school functions, picnicking and scenic drives.

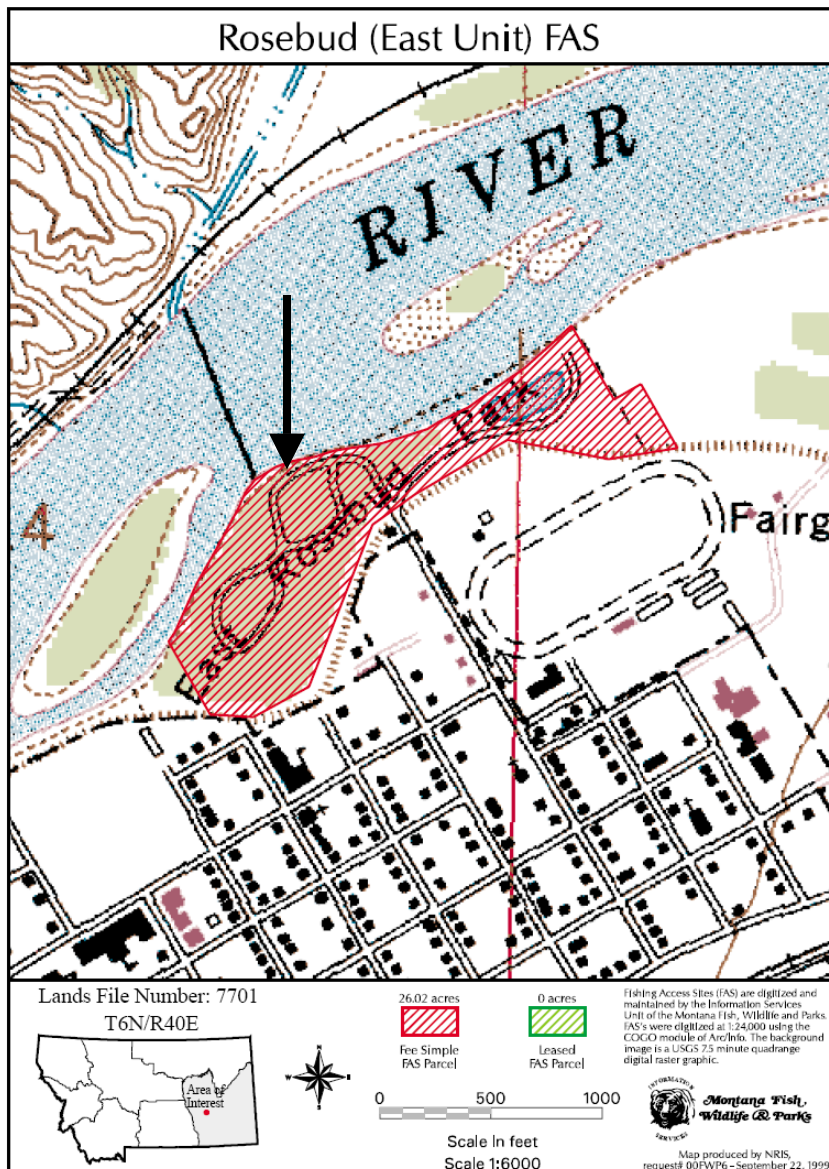


Figure 2. Site map of Rosebud East FAS. The approximate location of the boat ramp is indicated by the arrow.

Over the last few years the boat ramp at Rosebud East has become increasingly difficult to use because a sandbar has formed directly in front of the boat ramp in the river channel. This sandbar was caused by an irrigation diversion dam immediately above the boat ramp (see Figure 3), which slows water velocity in the area of the boat ramp and leads to deposition of sediment. Depending on water levels, this sandbar either partially or completely blocks the boat ramp; making boat launching and take-out very difficult in most conditions. The conditions that created the sandbar would not be affected by the proposed project, so it is likely that the project would need to be repeated on a periodic basis, maybe once every 10-12 years. There is another boat ramp one mile upstream at Rosebud West, but camping is not allowed there. Also, the diversion dam upstream from Rosebud East creates a barrier for boaters in this section. Boaters who are headed downstream cannot simply bypass difficult conditions at Rosebud East by using Rosebud West, because the diversion dam lies between the two. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain useable boat ramps in both locations.

In light of these facts, FWP proposes to improve boating access to Rosebud East FAS by removing the sandbar and dredging a deeper channel in the immediate vicinity of the boat ramp. This action would significantly improve the usability of the boat ramp and public enjoyment of this site and this section of the Yellowstone River without causing any significant adverse environmental impacts.



Figure 3. View of the irrigation diversion dam immediately upstream from the boat ramp.



Figure 4. View of boat ramp at Rosebud East FAS during low water. The sandbar can be seen in the upper right side of the photograph about shoulder height with the person standing on the boat ramp.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. **Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, the sandbar would not be removed and use of the boat ramp at Rosebud East FAS would continue to be difficult in most conditions and especially during periods of low water levels in the Yellowstone, which commonly start in mid-late July and continue through the end of the season. When water levels are low, users need the boat launch at Rosebud FAS to get below the diversion dam.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

Note: a detailed evaluation of the Proposed Action is included in Part VI. Environmental Review Checklist beginning on page 8.

In alternative B, the sandbar would be removed and a deeper channel dug in the vicinity of the boat ramp. This would allow for safe boat launching and it will eliminate the need for boaters to drive in the river in order to get over the sandbar and launch their boats. This alternative would be in step with FWP's mission to provide excellent public access to the State's rivers and lakes, including a good system of boat ramps. The general public is in strong support of this action and there would be no significant environmental impacts from the action.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

There are no formal stipulations of mitigation or other controls associated with the proposed action. This action does not involve any permits or granting of a license on which stipulations would be placed.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to improve boating conditions at Rosebud East FAS by removing a sandbar in the channel of the Yellowstone River that currently impedes use of the boat ramp, especially during periods of low water levels.

This EA did not reveal any significant negative impacts to the physical and human environment stemming from the proposed action. No threatened or endangered species would be affected, and no unique or physical features would be disturbed. The boat ramp at Rosebud East FAS is an integral part of the state's FAS system, and current conditions prevent full use of the boat ramp and therefore the site as a whole. In short, the proposed project would considerably increase visitor enjoyment of the site and that stretch of the Yellowstone River as a whole without causing significant adverse affects to the environment.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The public will be notified by way of two statewide press releases, and legal notices in the *Miles City Star* and the *Helena Independent Record* and by public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices>. Individual notices will be sent to the region's standard EA distribution list and to those that have requested one.

2. Duration of comment period, if any.

A 30-day comment period is proposed. This level of public involvement is appropriate for this scale of project.

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

Based on an evaluation of the primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts to the physical and human environment under the Montana Environmental Protection Act (MEPA), this environmental review found no significant impacts from the proposed

sandbar removal project. In determining the significance of the impacts, FWP assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact, the probability that the impact would occur or reasonable assurance that the impact would not occur, growth-inducing or growth inhibiting aspects of the impact, the importance to the state and to society of the environmental resource or value affected, and precedent that would be set as a result of the proposed action that would commit FWP to future actions; and potential conflicts with local, federal, or state laws. Therefore, an EA is the appropriate level of review and an EIS is not required.

2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Allan Kuser	John Little	Linnaea Schroeer-Smith
FAS Coordinator	Park Manager	Independent Contractor
1420 East Sixth Ave	PO Box 1630	1027 9 th Ave
Helena, MT 59620	Miles City, MT 59301	Helena, MT 59601
(406) 444-7885	(406)234-0923	(406)495-9620
akuser@mt.gov	jlittle@mt.gov	mtflower3@bresnan.net

3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division
Wildlife Division
Fisheries Division
Design & Construction Bureau
Lands Division
Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

PART VI. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

3. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			X			1d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 1d. The removal of the sandbar and the associated dredging would cause minor changes in siltation and deposition patterns in that immediate section of river. It is anticipated that the diversion dam will continue to cause gravel deposition in this area and will require periodic removal.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X			2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)						
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 2a. Most of the material being removed will be wet so little or no impact to air quality will be realized as a result of this project.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X			3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?			X			3c.
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)						
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)						
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 3a. The proposed action would cause an increase in turbidity in the vicinity of the boat ramp during removal of the sandbar, but would end after completion of the project. This short, localized spike in turbidity is not expected to alter temperature or dissolved oxygen levels in that stretch of the river.
- 3c. The removal of the sandbar would subtly alter the course of water in that proximate section, but the change would be too small to change the larger course of the Yellowstone, and is not anticipated to affect any public or private properties downstream.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X			4b.
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?						
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 4a. The proposed removal of the sandbar would disturb any aquatic plants in the immediate vicinity of the boat ramp and sandbar. However, the effects of these actions do not constitute significant or potentially significant changes to the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species in the area.
- 4b. Please see comment 4a.
- 4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage database did not show any documented occurrences of unique, rare, threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species in the Rosebud East FAS area.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

** 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)						
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)						
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 5f. Hatchery reared, juvenile pallid sturgeon, have been released below Cartersville Diversion for research purposes. This project will not effect ongoing research. Please see comment 4c and Appendix 2 for additional information about Species of Concern within and around Rosebud East FAS.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 6a. There would be a temporary increase in noise level during removal of the sandbar but would end after completion of the project.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

7. LAND USE	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7a. There would be no alteration or interference with the existing land use in the greater Rosebud East FAS area.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X			8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)						
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. There is a minor risk of a fuel or oil spill from dredging equipment during removal of the sandbar.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X			9e.
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 9e. Equipment going in and out of the FAS during the removal process will be potentially hazardous to locals who typically walk or drive through the site. It will be necessary to block off the project area for safety reasons but this is anticipated to be for a short duration.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f.
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 10a. The proposed action would not have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services.
- 10e. The cost of the project is estimated at \$15,000. Funding would come from FAS (capitol major maintenance funds).
- 10f. There would be no future additional maintenance costs associated with this project.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X positive			11c.
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)						
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. Please see Tourism Report in Attachment A.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)						
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. The proposed project would not result in the destruction or alteration of any site, structure, or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				13a.
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)						
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13a. This EA found no significant impacts to the human or physical environment from the proposed action.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

APPENDIX 1
HB495
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date July 17, 2006

Person Reviewing Linnaea Schroeer-Smith

9. Project Location: **Rosebud East FAS, Rosebud County, MT. T6N, R40E, Section 13**

Description of Proposed Work: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes removing a sandbar in the Yellowstone River that partially blocks access to the boat ramp at Rosebud East FAS.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check ☐ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- ☐ **A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?**
Comments: None
- ☐ **B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?**
Comments: None
- ☒ **C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?**
Comments: The amount of material that would be removed from the river channel would likely exceed 20c.y. Please see Comment 1d. on page 8.
- ☐ **D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?**
Comments: None
- ☐ **E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?**
Comments: None.
- ☐ **F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?**
Comments: None
- ☐ **G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?**
Comments: SHPO clearance has been obtained for the proposed project.
- ☐ **H. Any new above ground utility lines?**
Comments: None

☐ I. **Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?**

Comments: None.

☐ J. **Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?**

Comments: None

If any of the above are checked, HB 495 rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

APPENDIX 2

Species of Concern in the Rosebud East FAS Area

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) element occurrence database (nhp.nris.state.mt.us/eoportal) indicates no known occurrences of federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed threatened or endangered plant or animal species in the proposed project site. Seven species of concern were identified within the search area. A more detailed analysis of those findings is provided below.

Species of Concern Terms and Definitions

Montana Species of Concern. The term "**Species of Concern**" includes taxa that are at-risk or potentially at-risk due to rarity, restricted distribution, habitat loss, and/or other factors. The term also encompasses species that have a special designation by organizations or land management agencies in Montana, including: Bureau of Land Management Special Status and Watch species; U.S. Forest Service Sensitive and Watch species; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Threatened, Endangered and Candidate species.

▼ **Status Ranks (Global and State)**

The international network of Natural Heritage Programs employs a standardized ranking system to denote global (**G** -- range-wide) and state status (**S**) (NatureServe 2003). Species are assigned numeric ranks ranging from 1 (critically imperiled) to 5 (demonstrably secure), reflecting the relative degree to which they are "at-risk". Rank definitions are given below. A number of factors are considered in assigning ranks -- the number, size and distribution of known "occurrences" or populations, population trends (if known), habitat sensitivity, and threat. Factors in a species' life history that make it especially vulnerable are also considered (e.g., dependence on a specific pollinator).

Status Ranks

Code	Definition
G1 S1	At high risk because of extremely limited and/or rapidly declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it highly vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G2 S2	At risk because of very limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G3 S3	Potentially at risk because of limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.
G4 S4	Uncommon but not rare (although it may be rare in parts of its range), and usually widespread. Apparently not vulnerable in most of its range, but possibly cause for long-term concern.
G5 S5	Common, widespread, and abundant (although it may be rare in parts of its range). Not vulnerable in most of its range.

1. *Sander canadensis* (Sauger)

State: **S2**
Global: **G5**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service:
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

The temporary, localized release of sediment from the proposed project would have a negligible effect on this species. Sauger migrate through this area but do not spawn in this section of the river.

2. *Cycoreus elongatus* (Blue Sucker)

Natural Heritage Ranks:
State: **S2S3**
Global: **G3G4**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service:
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

The temporary, localized release of sediment from the proposed project would have a negligible effect on this species.

3. *Macrhybopsis gelida* (Sturgeon Chub).

Natural Heritage Ranks:
State: **S2**
Global: **G3**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

The temporary, localized release of sediment from the proposed project would have a negligible effect on this species.

4. *Polyodon spathula* (Paddlefish).

Natural Heritage Ranks:
State: **S1S2**
Global: **G4**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service:
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

This sensitive species is not found in this section of the river, so they would not be affected by the proposed project.

5. *Apalone spinifera* (Spiny Softshell).

Natural Heritage Ranks:

State: **S3**

Global: **G5**

Federal Agency Status:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

U.S. Forest Service:

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

Recent survey work by FWP biologists has shown that the Spiny Softshell turtle is much more abundant on the Yellowstone River from Billings to Sidney than previously thought. Due to the small scope of this proposed project there will be no effect on turtle numbers.

6. *Calamospiza melanocorys* (Lark Bunting).

Natural Heritage Ranks:

State: **S3B**

Global: **G5**

Federal Agency Status:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

U.S. Forest Service:

U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

The proposed project would not disturb any terrestrial vegetation or habitat, so this species would not be affected.

7. *Numenius americanus* (Long-billed Curlew).

Natural Heritage Ranks:

State: **S2B**

Global: **G5**

Federal Agency Status:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

U.S. Forest Service:

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

The proposed project would not disturb any terrestrial vegetation or habitat, so this species would not be affected.

Interested parties may contact MFWP Region 7 offices for a detailed map of sensitive species Element Occurrences (EOs).

Information courtesy of Montana Natural Heritage Program.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce

ATTACHMENT A
TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Rosebud East FAS Boat Ramp Improvement Project

Project Location: **Rosebud East FAS, Rosebud County, MT. T6N, R40E, Section 13**

Description of Proposed Work: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes removing a sandbar in the Yellowstone River that partially blocks access to the boat ramp at Rosebud East FAS.

Project Description: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes removing a sandbar in the Yellowstone River that either partially or completely blocks access to the boat ramp at Rosebud East FAS. Removing the sandbar would allow full use of the boat ramp again therefore full use of Rosebud East FAS.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:
As described the project will allow full use of an existing FAS which should benefit the area economy.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:
The quantity and quality of opportunities will be restored with full use of the FAS

Signature Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator, MT Commerce Dept
Date August 3, 2006